

What is claimed is:

1 1. A preference information managing apparatus which outputs
2 preference information reflecting a user's preference,
3 comprising:

4 an obtaining unit operable to obtain one or more pieces
5 of characteristics information corresponding to a packaged
6 content used by the user;

7 a storing unit operable to store characteristics
8 information obtained by the obtaining unit; and

9 a calculating unit operable to calculate a score of each
10 piece of characteristics information stored in the storing unit,
11 and output a piece of characteristics information whose score
12 is high, as the preference information.

1 2. The preference information managing apparatus of Claim
2 1, wherein

3 the obtaining unit obtains (i) an ID, which is recorded
4 in the packaged content, from a packaged content using unit which
5 reads the packaged content, and (ii) characteristics information
6 from an external apparatus based on the obtained ID.

1 3. The preference information managing apparatus of Claim
2 1, wherein

3 the obtaining unit obtains characteristics information,
4 which is recorded in the packaged content, from a packaged content
5 using unit which reads the packaged content.

1 4. The preference information managing apparatus of Claim

2 1, wherein

3 the obtaining unit obtains a usage type from the packaged
4 content, which indicates whether the packaged content is for
5 purchase or for rental, and

6 the calculating unit calculates the score of each piece
7 of characteristics information in such a manner that in the case
8 where the obtained usage type indicates that the content is for
9 purchase, the score of each piece of characteristics information
10 is multiplied by a larger coefficient than a coefficient for
11 the case where the obtained usage type indicates that the content
12 is for rental.

1 5. The preference information managing apparatus of Claim
2 1, wherein

3 the obtaining unit further obtains one or more pieces of
4 characteristics information corresponding to a non-packaged
5 content used by the user, and

6 the calculating unit (i) calculates the score of each piece
7 of characteristics information corresponding to the packaged
8 and the non-packaged contents in such a manner that the score
9 of each piece of characteristics information corresponding to
10 the packaged content is multiplied by a larger coefficient than
11 a coefficient for characteristics information corresponding to
12 the non-packaged content, and (ii) outputs a piece of
13 characteristics information whose score is high, among all pieces
14 of characteristics information corresponding to the packaged
15 and the non-packaged contents, as the preference information.

1 6. The preference information managing apparatus of Claim
2 5, wherein

3 the storing unit stores characteristics information
4 corresponding to the packaged and the non-packaged contents in
5 a form where whether a source of characteristics information
6 is the packaged content or the non-packaged content is
7 identifiable, and

8 the calculating unit multiplies, when performing the
9 calculation, the score of each piece of characteristics
10 information corresponding to the packaged content by a larger
11 coefficient than a coefficient for characteristics information
12 corresponding to the non-packaged content.

1 7. The preference information managing apparatus of Claim
2 5, wherein

3 the storing unit stores characteristics information
4 corresponding to the packaged and the non-packaged contents after
5 the score of each piece of characteristics information
6 corresponding to the packaged content is multiplied by a larger
7 coefficient than a coefficient for characteristics information
8 corresponding to the non-packaged content.

1 8. The preference information managing apparatus of Claim
2 5, wherein

3 the obtaining unit obtains a usage type from the packaged
4 content, which indicates whether the packaged content is for
5 purchase or for rental, and

6 the calculating unit calculates the score of each piece

7 of characteristics information in such a manner that in the case
8 where the obtained usage type indicates that the content is for
9 purchase, the score of each piece of characteristics information
10 is multiplied by a larger coefficient than a coefficient for
11 the case where the obtained usage type indicates that the content
12 is for rental.

1 9. A preference information managing method which outputs
2 preference information reflecting a user's preference,
3 comprising:
4 an obtaining step for obtaining one or more pieces of
5 characteristics information corresponding to a packaged content
6 used by the user;
7 a storing step for storing characteristics information
8 obtained by the obtaining step; and
9 a calculating step for calculating a score of each piece
10 of characteristics information stored by the storing step, and
11 output a piece of characteristics information whose score is
12 high, as the preference information.

1 10. The preference information managing method of Claim 9,
2 wherein
3 the obtaining step further obtains one or more pieces of
4 characteristics information corresponding to a non-packaged
5 content used by the user, and
6 the calculating step (i) calculates the score of each piece
7 of characteristics information corresponding to the packaged
8 and the non-packaged contents in such a manner that the score

9 of each piece of characteristics information corresponding to
10 the packaged content is multiplied by a larger coefficient than
11 a coefficient for characteristics information corresponding to
12 the non-packaged content, and (ii) outputs a piece of
13 characteristics information whose score is high, among all pieces
14 of characteristics information corresponding to the packaged
15 and the non-packaged contents, as the preference information.